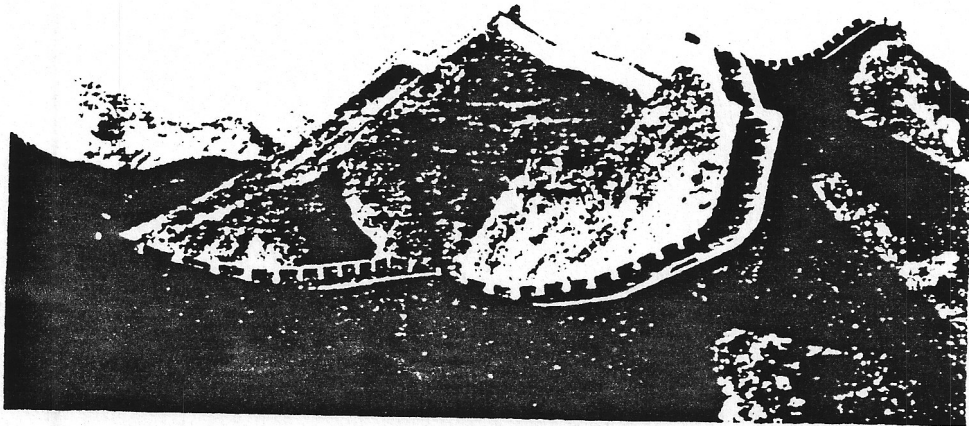


3

1920/1

89

The Great Wall
Sightseeing Trip Series
FOR
American Marines
AND
Other U. S. Service Men
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
The Legation Guard Y. M. C. A.
Peiping.



A Section of The Wall

Photo by Hartong

THE GREAT WALL

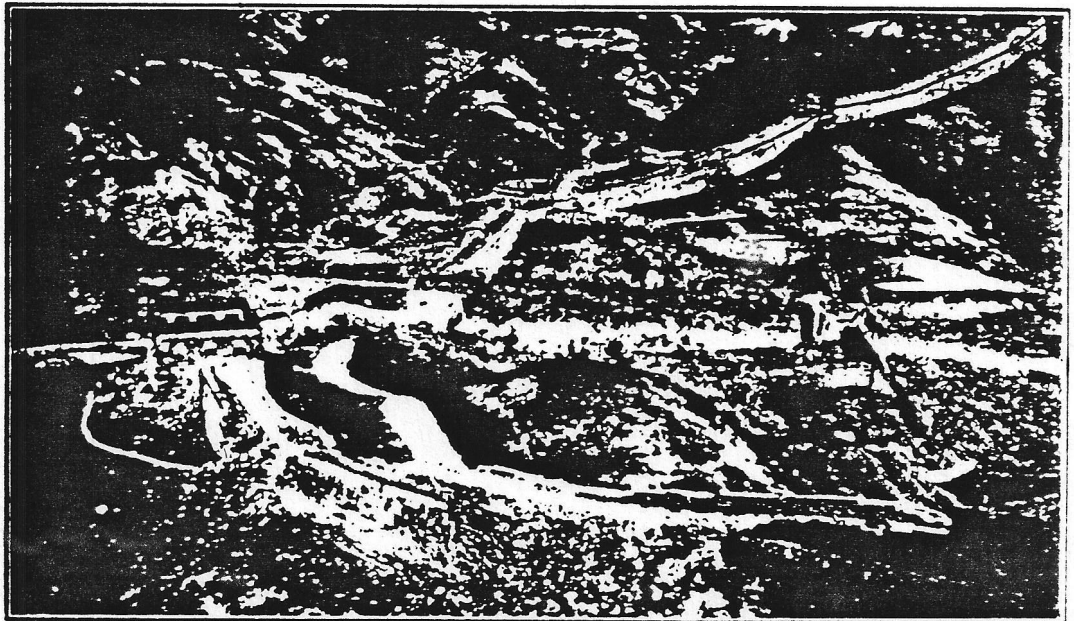
The Great Wall is easily reached from Peiping, being accessible by rail from the Hsichihmen Station of the Peking-Suiyuan Railway. The round trip can usually be made in one day, with ample time given at the Wall for sight-seeing, photography etc. The distance is about thirty-five miles. The village of Nankow lies at the south end of the pass, and from that point the rise is gradual but steep. The top of the pass is reached at Ch'ing Lung Ch'iao. Nankow means "Southern Mouth", while the station at the top is "Green Dragon Bridge". The top of the pass is 2060 feet above sea level. From Nankow the railway makes many windings and turns before it reaches the top, and one is persuaded that he has seen a dozen or more Great Walls instead of one. The entire pass is one succession of towers, fortifications, barricades and bulwarks. The wall at Nankow Pass is the innermost of five great loops, two of which are still traceable. One of these is said to pass through Kalgan. The others have been reduced by the weather to mere hummocks of earth. The wall at Nankow Pass is well preserved, and is perhaps the finest section of all the wall.

The Great Wall was built about two hundred years before the Christian era began, by the then Emperor known as Ch'in Shih Huang Ti. It is about fifteen hundred miles long, although some authorities give its length as two thousand miles. It extends from the sea at Shinghaikuan on the east out toward the borders of Thibet. It is something like twenty feet high and about as thick, and has watch towers placed at irregular intervals, some of which are only one hundred yards apart. Juliet Bredon says that it is "the only work of man's hands supposed to be visible from Mars". It was meant to keep back the Tartars from entrance into China. With the former methods of warfare there was little hope of success for an army faced by such a barrier. It is recorded that the Emperor used as many as 700,000 criminals and despised merchants as workmen, many of whom died of exhaustion. Some writers place the loss of men as high as sixty per cent. Other rulers repaired and extended the wall and one record is found stating that one ruler built a section of the wall in ten days by the employment of no less than a million men. The towers of the wall are so placed that a message could be signalled to Peking in a single night.

From the Railway Station at Ch'ing Lung Ch'iao one can walk to the wall in ten or fifteen minutes, and an hour there will give time for an examination of the structure and masonry and to gain a general view of the wall. One is impressed by the fact that the wall follows the most difficult lines rather than the easier routes. One wonders how the massive stones, the brick, mortar and other materials were transported to the heights and how food was provided for the workmen. We have spoken of these workmen as "unskilled labourers" but they built well and the wall has stood for more than two thousand years without grave deterioration. From the wall one can look out over the great Peking plain on the south, and into Mongolia on the north.

It is stated that when the Mings moved the capital from Nanking to the north a great deal of the commerce which formerly followed the southern routes was diverted to Nankow Pass. Also the opening up of trade with the Russian outposts in Siberia in the seventeenth century added a great deal to the camel traffic over this route.

The return trip from the top of the Pass is quite easy in comparison with the outward journey. The engineering skill shown in the construction of the railway is worthy of note, while many beautiful scenes are opened up for the traveller as the railway winds in and out among the hills. If one wishes to visit the Ming Tombs also, he should arrange to remain over night at the hotel in Nankow and proceed the next morning by donkey or on foot to the Tombs, lying some seven or eight miles to the east. The route is over mountain roads and uneven paths. A return to Nankow in time to catch the afternoon train to the city is possible. The Ming Tombs date from 1424.



4

